

War Memory

Lucas Carpenter

The next day after a night attack on our jungle hilltop position northeast of Pleiku by Viet Cong sappers, we left one of their bodies hanging on the concertina war so we could watch it rot.

"A science experiment," Doc, our medic, said.

First it turned the yellowish green of chlorine and started to bloat, stomach distending, grotesque with decay gas until it found release through ghastly parodies of belches and farts that made us jumpy except when we were high. Then we giggled a lot. Then one night a nervous new guy on his first sentry duty shot it full of what he called "air holes." The captain made us bury it the next morning.

"Bad for morale," he said.

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